A History of The Secretary of State's Office H167



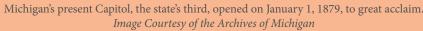


By Valerie R. Marvin

Michigan State Capitol Historian & Curator







The Golden Age of Capitol Construction

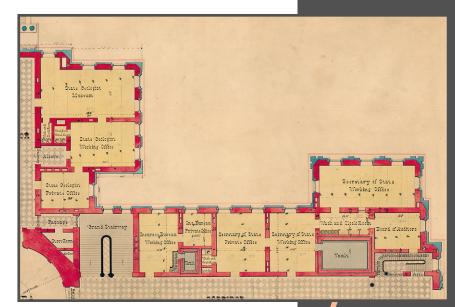
The Michigan State Capitol was built during the golden age of Capitol construction in the years following the American Civil War. From its inception, the building was designed to serve several functions and roles for the state. First, and most importantly, it is the official seat of government for the State of Michigan. It is a public forum where people can express their opinions, and a symbol of governmental traditions and the state itself. Yet the Capitol is also, at its very essence, an office building, where the day-to-day functions of government have played out for well over a century.

When the Capitol first opened in 1879, it was state government's only active office building, where all three branches of government were housed. The executive branch, including the Governor, State Treasurer, Secretary of State, State Librarian, Auditor General, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Adjutant General, claimed most of the offices within it. The judicial branch was represented by the Supreme Court, which occupied offices and an elegant chamber in the east wing of the third floor. The legislative branch used the House and Senate Chambers, the largest and most impressive rooms in the Capitol, as well as offices for the Secretary of the Senate, the Clerk of the House, and a few committee rooms. There were no offices for individual legislators, who, when in Lansing for brief part-time legislative sessions, worked from their desks on the chamber floors.

The Secretary of State and the Board of Auditors

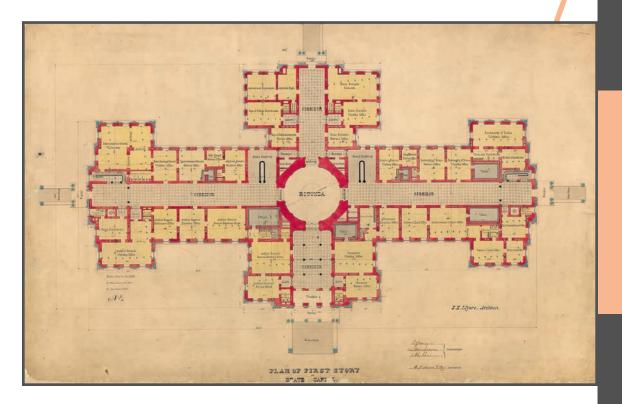
Capitol architect Elijah E. Myers split the offices on the west side of the Capitol's north wing (first floor level) between the powerful Secretary of State, and the Board of State Auditors. The Secretary of State (sometimes known as the Department of State) may have used as many as seven rooms, including a wash and cloak room. In addition, their suite included a large fireproof document vault the size of a room in which the State Constitution and Michigan's first flag were stored.¹

William Jenney was the first Secretary of State to work in the new Capitol. He shared his office with Deputy William Crosby and Clerk George W. Freeman. A Civil War veteran, Jenney practiced law in Mount



Clemens, Michigan, before being elected to the State Senate in 1876.² A man known to be deeply interested in agriculture, he worked his Mount Clemens farm and served on the Committee for the Agricultural College (MSU) while in the legislature. In 1878 the people of Michigan sent him back to the Capitol as Secretary of State, a position he held until 1882.³

Jenney would have been joined in his office by a bevy of clerks. A quick glimpse at the 1878-1879 report of the Auditor General reveals that as many as eighteen different clerks worked for the department at some point throughout the fiscal year. Interestingly, seven of these clerks were women.⁴



The Capitol's original hand inked floor plans still survive in the Archives of Michigan. The first floor plan included suggested locations for each departmental office—some of which were ultimately changed.

Image Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan





Michigan State Capitol Directory. First Floor. WEST CORRIDOR. Superintendent of Public Instruction. Board of Health. nunissioner of Railroads. SOUTH CORRIDOR. IRIDOR. Inspector General. Adjutant General. Quartermaster General. (Tax Department) Commissioner of Insurance, Sup't of State Property. NORTH CORRIDOR Board of Auditors. Deputy Treasurer. Swamp Land Office. Second Floor. EAST CORRIDOR. Private Secretary WEST CORRIDOR. State Library. SOUTH CORRIDOR. Senate Chamber. NORTH CORRIDOR. Third Floor. Justices' Room-WEST CORRIDOR. Law Liorary. Attorneys' Consultation Room Clerk of Supreme Court. Senate Gallery NORTH CORRIDOR. Representative Hall Gallery. Fourth Floor. Pioneers' Amlience Room WEST CORRIDOR. Basement. EAST CORRIDOR, Board of State Charities. Auditor's Working Rooms, Auditor's Working Rooms. State Armory Pomological Society. and State Board of Agriculture. Military Store Rooms.

With Compliments of A. L. Borns, Superintendent of State Property

This early Capitol Directory survives in the Jenison Collection, a series of six scrapbooks compiled to record the Capitol's 1872-1878 construction by historian and collector O.A. Jenison.

Image Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan

The last room in the suite functioned as the home of the Board of State Auditors, which was comprised of the Secretary of State, the State Treasurer, and the Commissioner of the State Land Office. The Governor and the Attorney General also served as advisory members. The Board met monthly to review the state's expenses, and was staffed by a single clerk, former legislator Thomas M. Wilson.⁵

Like the rest of the Capitol, this suite was designed to be both functional and beautiful, as befitted a growing and prosperous state. "The offices throughout are elegantly fitted up," a reporter wrote

following his visit on January 1, 1879, for the Capitol's official dedication. "All of the doors are massive in finish, and fitted with locks specially made to order and

The offices throughout are elegantly fitted up . . .

... artists who stenciled,

grained, marbled,

and striped

beautiful motifs . . .

being on bronze hinges, and bearing the arms of the state." Passing through the main doorway, visitors stepped onto a colorful Brussels wool wall-to-wall carpet, laid in strips and carefully sewn together by hand. Sturdy and tasteful polished walnut desks, chairs, tables, and bookcases stood at attention, ready for use. Tall windows, framed by crisp wooden pocket shutters, ushered in natural light, while elegant new gas chandeliers, purchased from the Mitchell Vance Company in New York, gleamed overhead.

Early Changes

As might be expected, change in these offices, and the rest of the Capitol, was constant. Two major improvements were launched in the

1880s, only a few years after the building opened. First, starting in 1885, electricians began wiring the Capital for a new technology—electric lights

the Capitol for a new technology—electric lights. Prior to this, the Capitol was lighted entirely by gas fixtures. That same year, painters began to decorate the Capitol's plain white plaster walls with an array of rich colors and ornate designs. Slowly, every room, including the Secretary of State's offices, was transformed by artists who stenciled, grained, marbled, and striped beautiful motifs on the walls and ceilings.

In 1892, the Board of State Auditors directed the Superintendent of the Capitol to survey the building and its contents. He recorded his findings in their annual bound report, which survives to this day. The survey began in the Board's own office, home to a relatively modest list of items including chairs, tables, a letter press (with stand), a dictionary rack, three gas chandeliers, and a Remington typewriter (that actually belonged to the State Senate). The larger Secretary of State's Office housed a number of desks, tables, bookcases, over two dozen chairs, a map case, umbrella stands, electric clocks, and, most importantly, the official Great Seal of the state.⁷

During this period, the following Secretaries of State worked in this space.8

1879-1882	William Jenney	1894-1898	Washington Gardner
1883-1886	Harry A. Conant	1899-1900	Justus S. Stearns
1887-1890	Gilbert R. Osmun	1901-1904	Fred M. Warner
1891-1892	Daniel E. Soper	1905-1908	George A. Prescott
1892	Robert R. Blacker	1909-1914	Frederick C. Martindalo
1893-1894	John W. Jochim	1915-1920	Coleman C. Vaughan

The Twentieth Century

Always considered a foundational piece of state government, the Secretary of State's office grew tremendously in the early twentieth century. New laws regulating the licensing of drivers and automobiles ushered in an era of hiring and expansion. The Secretary of State pushed into other areas of the Capitol, including the office formerly used by the State Board of Auditors and the bulk of the rooms once occupied by the Land Office Board and the State Treasurer (located on the east side of the north wing).

The opening of the State Office Building (now known as the Elliott-Larsen Building) in 1922 brought the departure of many longtime Capitol tenants, including the massive State Library, which once occupied rooms on the second, third, and fourth floor in the west wing. The Law Library, considered essential to the Legislature and Supreme Court, remained in the second floor space. The Supreme Court created offices on the third floor, and the Secretary of State's licensing division moved up to the fourth floor.

In fact, the Secretary of State's responsibilities and staff continued to grow at such a rate that, by the time the State Treasurer surveyed the Capitol and its contents in 1941, the department was the largest tenant in the Capitol. Three hundred and forty-one people now worked for the Secretary of State in ground, first, and fourth floor offices that comprised 21,250 square feet of space. To their credit, the Treasurer's staff identified every single room number and counted each staff person, desk, table, file, machine, and bookcase being used by the state's largest department.

On the ground floor, the Secretary of State used rooms 12-18 and 21 in the north and west wings. Combined these spaces housed fifty-six desks, twelve tables, sixty-two files, six machines, and nine



bookcases.¹⁰ Seventy-three people worked in rooms 112-117a on the first floor, in which they used seventy-nine desks, eighteen tables, twenty-nine files, five machines, and thirteen bookcases.¹¹Rooms 400-402,

The women of the Department of State's Accounting Division took a break from their work one day to pose for a photograph on the Capitol's steps. By the 1920s women formed the majority of the workforce in many departments, holding all but the top tier of jobs.

Image Courtesy of the Charles Blair Collection, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan





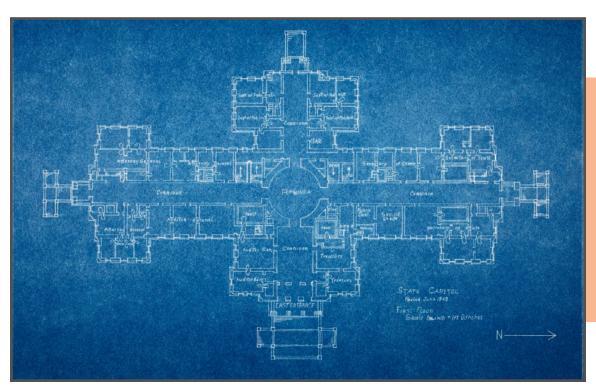
This unusual photograph suggests that the Department of State, and possibly other departments, utilized portions of the chambers when the legislature was not in session. In this image over twenty women sit at tables bearing typewriters in the northeast corner of the House Chamber, while one male supervisor looks on.

Image Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan

404, 410, and 420-423 on the top floor were home to the vehicle title division. Tightly packed with 189 people, ninety-five desks, fifty tables, 362 files, seven machines, and three bookcases, this space was overcrowded and clearly overdue for a reorganization.¹²



In 1941 (the same year as the survey) Secretary of State (and future governor) Harry Kelly won accolades for his efforts to reduce his department's fourth floor clutter by replacing voluminous paper automobile title and registration records with photographic reproductions captured and stored on film. "In the new system, every application is photographed in miniature," an article in *The Capitol Bulletin* explained. "When reference to it has to be made, a tiny roll of film is placed in a small projecting machine and the enlarged picture is ready for inspection." Now, instead of storing large paper records on tall wooden racks and shelves, the film records could be stored in small cabinets, similar to library card catalogue cases. (The film referred to is most likely microfilm or microfiche).



By the 1940s, space in the increasingly crowded Capitol was at a premium. Only the largest, most powerful departments retained their Capitol suites, while smaller divisions used rooms in the State Office Building, or in rented quarters downtown.

Image Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan

Two years later Treasury repeated their survey exercise. This time, they included not only the number of people, pieces of furniture, and machines housed in each office in 1943, but also in 1940. As was true in many facets of state government, the number of people working for the Secretary of State temporarily declined during the war. In addition, an increasing number of machines were introduced into offices. In 1940 the Secretary of State's staff in the Capitol building was comprised of 341 people, who used 241 desks, seventy-five tables, 388 files, twenty-one machines, and nineteen bookcases (plus one additional full room of books). By contrast, in 1943, the staff included 273 people, using 180 desks, seventy-nine tables, 420 files, thirty-four machines, and twenty-five bookcases (plus a full room of additional bookcases).

In 1957, architect George R. Page prepared another set of mid-twentieth-century drawings for the Buildings and Construction Division of the Michigan State Administrative Board. Page's drawings indicate that the Secretary of State continued to occupy the same rooms on the ground, first, and fourth floors as in the 1940s. The only major difference is that the rooms now bore new identifiers. The area today used by the House Minority Leader was then known as rooms 110, 110A, 110B, 110C, 111, 112, 112A, and 113.¹⁶

During this period, the following Secretaries of State worked in this office.¹⁷

1921-1926	Charles J. DeLand	1939-1942	Harry F. Kelly
1927-1930	John S. Haggerty	1943-1946	Herman H. Dignan
1931-1934	Frank D. Fitzgerald	1947-1952	Fred M. Alger, Jr.
1934	Clarke W. Brown	1953-1954	Owen J. Cleary
1935-1936	Orville E. Atwood	1955-1970	James M. Hare
1937-1938	Leon D. Case		





The Office of the Great Seal, a division of the Department of State, remained in the Capitol into the early 1970s. In this image clerk Thelma Guenther (foreground) and her supervisor Joyce Merchant work busily at their typewriters while a photograph of Secretary of State Richard Austin looks on. Note the decorative plaster arch, the fluorescent light, white walls, and the official state seal in the corner.

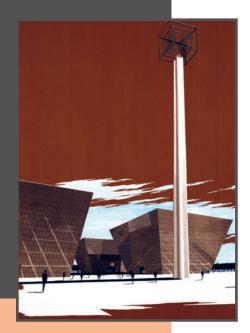
Image Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan

National and state flags flanked the official Great Seal press and stand in the Secretary of State's Capitol's office.

Image Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan







Several of the plans considered for the new Capitol in the 1960s contained three buildings—designed to house and symbolize the three branches of government—and a central pylon.

Image Courtesy of the Michigan State Capitol Collection

The Legislature Moves In

The late 1960s and early 1970s were times of great change in the Capitol building. After ninety years of shuffling, squeezing, and relocating, the decision was made to dramatically remodel many of the offices in the Capitol. The action was motivated by a number of factors, including the state's move to a full-time legislature. This had dramatic repercussions for the Capitol building, where the pace of business in both House and Senate spaces increased significantly. As the number of legislators spending every week in Lansing rose, the call for additional office space reached a fever pitch. In order to accommodate all of these members, space had to be found—preferably in the Capitol. Governor Romney's preferred solution called for the construction of a new Capitol. While significant steps were taken towards this ambitious goal, ultimately the project was tabled over cost and aesthetic concerns.

When it became clear that a new Capitol was not to be, another solution was proposed. Why not reconfigure the Capitol's offices and committee rooms? The timing seemed ideal, as several of the building's longtime departmental occupants, including the Secretary of State, were moving out of the Capitol and into other buildings in downtown Lansing. In its place came legislators, eager for their own offices. By 1965, Room 110, on the far north end of the suite, served briefly as the new Speaker's Office.

A scheme was developed to capture new space in the old building by subdividing the rooms in half to create two ten-foot high offices, one above the other. From 1969 to 1972, almost every office on the Capitol's first, second, and third floors received an overfloor (sometimes called half floors or mezzanines). At the same time, offices were modernized by adding drop ceilings, fluorescent lighting, and institutional carpeting and furnishings. Original decorative paint had already been covered under layers of overpaint, paneling, and wallpaper. Almost every vestige of the Capitol's original elegance and character had disappeared.

capture new space in the old building by subdividing the rooms in half...

A scheme was developed to



Offices, corridors, and even the lobby into the House Chamber, seen here, were sliced in half horizontally to create additional office space in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Image Courtesy of the Michigan State Capitol Collection

Office Occupants

By the publication of the *1969-1970 Michigan Legislative Handbook*, this suite of rooms was being used as House member offices. A survey of the handbooks indicates that the following members worked in this space over the years.

Please note that the district numbers in the table reflect those in use at the time each respective handbook was printed.¹⁹

1965-1966	Rep. Joseph J. Kowalski	19th District	Detroit	Rm. 110
1967-1968	Rep. William A. Ryan	3rd District	Detroit	Rm. 110
1969-1970	Rep. Stanley J. Davis	92nd District	Grand Rapids	Rm. 110
	Rep. William A. Ryan	3rd District	Detroit	Rm. 110
	Rep. Raymond Kehres	39th District	Monroe	Rm. 110-A
	Rep. Robert D. Mahoney	6th District	Detroit	Rm. 110-A
	Rep. Matthew McNeely	26th District	Detroit	Rm. 112
	Rep. George F. Montgomery	20th District	Detroit	Rm. 112
1971-1972	Rep. Stanley J. Davis	92nd District	Grand Rapids	Rm. 110
17/1 17/2	Rep. Raymond C. Kehres	39th District	Monroe	Rm. 110
	Rep. Robert D. Mahoney	6th District	Detroit	Rm. 110
	Rep. William A. Ryan	3rd District	Detroit	Rm. 110
	Rep. Marvin R. Stempien	35th District	Livonia	Rm. 112
	Rep. Matthew McNeely	26th District	Detroit	Rm. 112-Upper
1973-1974	Rep. Raymond C. Kehres	39th District	Monroe	Rm. 110
	Rep. Daisy Elliott	8th District	Detroit	Rm. 112
	Rep. Matthew McNeely	16th District	Detroit	Rm. 112 ½
1975-1976	Rep. Raymond C. Kehres	39th District	Monroe	Rm. 110
	Rep. John S. Mowat, Jr.	40th District	Adrian	Rm. 110
	Rep. James E. Defebaugh	65th District	Birmingham	Rm. 110 ½
	Rep. Daisy Elliott	8th District	Detroit	Rm. 112
	Rep. Matthew McNeely	16th District	Detroit	Rm. 112-A
1977-1978	Rep. Raymond Kehres	39th District	Monroe	Rm. 110
	Rep. William R. Bryant, Jr.	13th District	Grosse Pointe	Rm. 110 ½
	Rep. E. Dan Stevens	106th District	Atlanta	Rm. 110 ½
	Rep. Daisy Elliott	8th District	Detroit	Rm. 112
	Rep. Matthew McNeely	16th District	Detroit	Rm. 112-A
	•		Detroit	Kiii, 112-11
1979-1980	Rep. Connie Binsfeld	104th District	Maple City	Rm. 110
	Rep. Raymond C. Kehres	39th District	Monroe	Rm. 110
	Rep. J. Michael Busch	100th District	Saginaw	Rm. 110 ½
	Rep. James E. Defebaugh	65th District	Birmingham	Rm. 110 ½
	Rep. Morris W. Hood Jr.	6th District	Detroit	Rm. 112
	Rep. Matthew McNeely	16th District	Detroit	Rm. 112-A
1981-1982	Rep. Connie Binsfeld	104th District	Maple City	Rm. 110
	Rep. Daisy E. Elliott	8th District	Detroit	Rm. 110
	Rep. J. Michael Busch	100th District	Saginaw	Rm. 110 ½
	Rep. James E. Defebaugh	65th District	Birmingham	Rm. 110 ½ Rm. 110 ½
			•	
	Rep. Morris J. Hood Jr.	6th District	Detroit	Rm. 112
	Rep. Matthew McNeely	16th District	Detroit	Rm. 112-A
	Rep. Joe Conroy	79th District	Flint	Rm. 113 ½







The Capitol's Restoration

In 1987, the Michigan Senate and the House of Representatives began the process of restoring Michigan's Capitol. Chief among their goals was to return the building to its original Victorian grandeur while modernizing the many outdated systems within it. They sought to make the Capitol a living, working

museum, where the functions of government would continue to play out in a beautiful and inspiring historical setting. In order to carry out this mission, the restoration team, made up of supportive elected officials, architects, crafts-people, and artists, would need to touch every single space in the Capitol, including the old Secretary of State's suite.

When the restoration began in 1987, no one knew the extent of the art in the Capitol's offices. Decorative artists spent months investigating and revealing the original motifs and color schemes, all of which were carefully recorded and recreated.

Image Courtesy of the Michigan State Capitol Collection





Artists from across the country and around the world labored to recreate acres of decorative motifs. Much of the Capitol's most elaborate art can be found on or near the ceilings, which emphasizes the impressive height of the rooms.

Image Courtesy of the Michigan State Capitol Collection

Changes came swiftly. Overfloors and suspended ceilings were removed, returning the height of the rooms to their full twenty-two feet. Tradespeople rerouted and disguised ductwork, wiring, and sprinkler heads. Appropriate carpeting, designed using colors and patterns from the Victorian era, and period inspired furnishings, were crafted and installed. Skilled designers and craftspeople used photographs to recreate original gas lighting fixtures removed in the early twentieth century. New windows, neatly trimmed with appropriate wood shutters and draperies, replaced old.

Of particular importance to the restoration was the recreation of the Capitol's historic decorative artwork. Michigan's Capitol contains approximately nine acres of hand painted art. A variety of techniques were used in the building when it was decorated in the 1880s, including stenciling, striping, marbling, and gilding. Over the years, the artwork was painted over many times as styles changed. For the first time, careful research was undertaken to determine the original colors and decorative paint motifs found in these rooms. These colors and motifs were then replicated by talented decorative artists who used traditional techniques to return the room to a proper late nineteenth century appearance.

One of the techniques used in this space is that of wood graining. The original Capitol building commissioners made the decision to use white pine as the dominant

wood throughout the building. White pine was relatively inexpensive and available in abundance in this period. They did not intend, however, for people to recognize the wood as pine. Once the pine was installed, it was woodgrained—that is, painted carefully to mimic a more expensive wood—by talented artists. In the Capitol, painters transformed yards of humble pine by painting it with the grain of walnut, the most fashionable (and therefore rather expensive) choice of the 1870s. The technique they used was replicated by modern decorative painters during the restoration. They labored many hours to apply the necessary seven layers of paint needed to mimic the late nineteenth century process.

The restoration of the Capitol was completed in the fall of 1992. Rededication ceremonies held on November 19 and 20 of that year celebrated the success of the project, which won many significant state and national preservation awards. That same fall, the building was officially designated a National Historic Landmark, the highest honor accorded historic structures in America.



A workman lays sections of raised access computer flooring during the Capitol's restoration in room H167. Most of the wiring for the Capitol is tucked into these floors, which can be easily removed for upgrades.

Image Courtesy of the Michigan State Capitol Collection





Post Restoration Use

The completion of the Capitol's restoration brought with it the need to resolve matters concerning the identification and future use of the Capitol's rooms, including this suite, which includes a conference room (H161) and the office of the House Minority Leader (and for a few terms, also the Assistant Minority Floor Leader). A new numbering system, devised by Capitol Preservation Architect Richard C. Frank, was introduced indicating the ownership of the space (House, Senate, Executive, etc.) and the room's number. Today this suite is numbered H165, H165A, H165B, H167, H167B, H167C, H167D, H169, and H169A.

The following members have served in this suite, since the Capitol's restoration.²⁰

1993-1994	Rep. Raymond M. Murphy Rep. Curtis Hertel	7th District 2nd District	Detroit Detroit	Rm. H165 Rm. H167
1995-1996	Rep. Raymond M. Murphy Rep. Curtis Hertel	7th District 2nd District	Detroit Detroit	Rm. H165 Rm. H167
1997-1998	Rep. Raymond M. Murphy Rep. Morris Hood Jr.	7th District 11th District	Detroit Detroit	Rm. H165 Rm. H167
1999-2000	Rep. Michael J. Hanley	95th District	Saginaw	Rm. H167
2001-2002	Rep. Kwame M. Kilpatrick	9th District	Detroit	Rm. H167
2003-2004	Rep. Dianne Byrum	67th District	Onondaga	Rm. H167
2005-2006	Rep. Dianne Byrum	67th District	Onondaga	Rm. H167
2007-2008	Rep. Craig M. DeRoche	38th District	Novi	Rm. H167
2009-2010	Rep. Kevin A. Elsenheimer	105th District	Kewadin	Rm. H167
2011-2012	Rep. Richard E. Hammel	48th District	Flushing	Rm. H167
2013-2014	Rep. Tim Greimel	29th District	Pontiac	Rm. H167
2015-2016	Rep. Tim Greimel	29th District	Pontiac	Rm. H167
2017-2018	Rep. Sam Singh	69th District	East Lansing	Rm. H167
2019-2020	Rep. Christine Greig	37th District	Farmington Hills	Rm. H167

End Notes

- 1 At the time Michigan was governed by the notoriously disliked 1850 Constitution. The vault most likely also held the original 1835 Constitution, drafted during Michigan's attempt to gain statehood during the Mason administration.
- 2 The Red Book for the Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Michigan. W.S. George & Co., State Printers and Binders, 1879, p. 514.
- 3 Michigan Official Directory and Legislative Manual Published by the State of Michigan 1923-1924. Charles J. DeLand, p. 77.
- 4 Annual Report of the Auditor General of the State of Michigan for the Fiscal Year Ending Sept. 30, 1879. W.S. George & Co., State Printers and Binders, 1879, p. 37.
- 5 *The Red Book for the Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Michigan*. W.S. George & Co., State Printers and Binders, 1879, p. 257. Wilson's career ended when he admitted to embezzling money from the state.
- 6 The Evening News, January 2, 1879.
- 7 Annual Report of the Board of State Auditors for the State of Michigan for the Year 1892. Robert Smith & Co., State Printers and Binders, 1892, p. 513-514.
- 8 Michigan Official Directory and Legislative Manual Published by the State of Michigan 1923-1924. Charles J. DeLand, p. 77.
- 9 State of Michigan, Department of Treasury. "Capitol Space and Contents Survey," 1941.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 "Acres of Records Filed in Inches of Space Now," The Capitol Bulletin, July 9, 1941.
- 14 State of Michigan, Department of Treasury. "Capitol Space and Contents Survey," 1941 and 1943.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 State of Michigan, Michigan State Administrative Board Buildings and Construction Division. "Capitol Survey," George R. Page, 1957.
- 17 Michigan Manual 1971-1972, p. 88.
- 18 The Superintendent of Public Instruction had moved to the Prudden Building by the printing of the *1965-66 Michigan Manual*.
- 19 Michigan Legislative Handbooks, 1965-1990.
- 20 Michigan Legislative Handbooks, 1993-2020.









Capitol.Michigan.gov